

# CRM

VOLUME 17 • NO. 3

1 9 9 4

## Thematic Issue

Cultural Resources Management  
Information for  
Parks, Federal Agencies,  
Indian Tribes, States, Local  
Governments and the  
Private Sector



U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Cultural Resources

## NPS, its Partners, and International Historic Preservation

Since the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in April 1986, which spread radiation as far as eastern Iceland in a radius of over 1,600 miles, we have become increasingly aware globally of the fragility of our environment. Witness the UN "Earth Summit" conference in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 and the continuing uproar over the spotted owl in the forests of our Northwest. But more dramatic have been the political events in the former USSR and eastern Europe since 1989 which have changed the world we have known since the end of World War II. John Poppeliers, in an introductory article to this thematic issue of *CRM* on the US National Park Service's involvement in international historic preservation activities, sketches these global occurrences and events as a background for our understanding of the great immediate needs, the almost insurmountable difficulties, as well as the opportunities for international cooperation to protect cultural resources. The National Park Service and its professional partners in both the private and public sectors have contributed substantially to international historic preservation efforts during this period of global change. An overview of recent NPS programs, partnerships, and plans for the future is the subject of this thematic issue of *CRM*.



# A New World Order and Historic Preservation

John Poppeliers

One of the first signs of the demise of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War was the fall of the Berlin Wall between East and West Germany on November 9-11, 1989. Since then, one can compose a litany of seemingly irrevocable global changes:

- Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu overthrown and executed; December 25, 1989
- Poland's Communist Party dissolved; January 29, 1990
- Lithuania proclaimed independence; March 11, 1990
- Unification of West and East Germany; October 3, 1990
- Solidarity leader Lech Walesa elected President of Poland; December 9, 1990
- Warsaw Pact nations voted to dissolve its military structure; March 31, 1991
- Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and leaders of nine of the USSR's 15 republics announced agreement to share political power; April 24, 1991
- Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavian Federation; June 25, 1991
- Last Soviet troops departed Hungary (June 19, 1991) and Czechoslovakia (June 21, 1991)
- Presidents Bush and Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in Moscow; July 30, 1991
- Gorbachev resigned as general secretary of the USSR's Communist Party; August 24, 1991
- USSR officially recognized the independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; September 6, 1991
- Israel and the Soviet Union restored diplomatic ties; October 18, 1991
- Middle East talks between Israel, Arab nations, and Palestinians began in Madrid; October 30, 1991
- Gorbachev resigned presidency of the Soviet Union; December 25, 1991
- President Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a statement of general principles which ended the Cold War; February 1, 1992
- Bosnia-Herzegovina's Muslim-Croat majority voted for independence from Yugoslavia; February 29, 1992
- 12-day UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), nicknamed the "Earth Summit", in Rio de Janeiro; June 1992.
- First Russian astronaut flew on a US space shuttle; February 3-11, 1994

The magnitude of these changes! By 1991 the world we had known since the beginning of the Cold War—with the two super powers and their allies locked in political, ideological, and economic combat, and the non-aligned nations waffling between the two to obtain whatever economic benefits they could—had come tumbling down and democracy appeared the victor. These events and developments seemed opportunities for the international community finally to realize the lofty goals of the UN

Charter and, in our own field of historic preservation, to realize the full potential of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

Yet another, contrapuntal litany can now be perceived. Perhaps the 1989 uproar that greeted the publication in England of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* in many ways epitomizes this second litany of nationalism, human intolerance, xenophobia, and lust for power:

- the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in the Ukraine; April 26, 1986
- the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq; August 1990
- the assassination of India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi; May 21, 1991
- the bombardment by Serbian military of Dubrovnik (Croatia), a historical city on the World Heritage List; October-December 1991, and May-June 1992
- the expulsion of Yugoslavia from membership in the United Nations; September 22, 1992
- the election of ex-Communists in Lithuania; October 25, 1992
- the destruction of a 16th century mosque by Hindus in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh, India); December 6, 1992 (more than 1,000 Hindus and Muslims killed)
- the resumption of neo-fascism in Germany, leading to attacks on foreigners; 1991-94
- "Ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia-Herzegovina; 1992-94
- the killing of at least 290 people and wounding of 670 by militant Muslim fundamentalists who seek to establish a strict Islamic state in Egypt; 1992-94
- the official independence of Czech and Slovak republics; January 1, 1993
- 68 killed, more than 200 seriously wounded, in the marketplace of old Sarajevo by Serbian bombardment; February 5, 1994.

This prologue is long but necessary for understanding the challenges confronting contemporary international historic preservation and for being able to assess the role the US, the NPS, and its partners have had and should have in the future. This international issue of CRM can perhaps help in this process.

The United States ratified the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage"—generally referred to as the World Heritage Convention (WHC)—on December 7, 1973. The Convention, which was adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on November 16, 1972, came into effect on August 7, 1976, after 20 member states of UNESCO either accepted or ratified it. In his CRM article on the Convention as it observed its 20th anniversary in 1992, Rick Cook—who has been with the NPS Office of International Affairs (OIA) since 1976 and has served as an adviser for the US delegations to 13 meetings of the World Heritage Committee—discusses the critical evaluation of the Convention and the "strategic orientation" study which was undertaken by the World Heritage Committee at that time. Since many of the international projects and exchanges of the Park Service are mandated by Article 6 of the Convention ("The States Party undertake...to give their help in the identification, protection, conservation and preservation of the [world's] cultural and natural heritage...."), it is

(Poppeliers—continued on page 26)

most useful to have a summary of what has been achieved by the Convention, particularly through the World Heritage List (WHL) and the World Heritage Fund (WHF), and what is recommended for its future. Implicitly these studies and Cook's *CRM* article also remind us of the fragility of our cultural and natural heritage in the face of the human disasters listed in my introductory "litanies." (The Convention is also the subject of a definitive study on "The Origins of the World Heritage Convention" by Dr. Ernest Allen Connally. Formerly the NPS associate director for cultural resources, he served as the secretary-general of ICOMOS from 1975 to 1981 and played a critical role in the development of criteria and procedures for implementing the Convention. His manuscript will be published in 1994 as a joint NPS-US/ICOMOS project.)

US/ICOMOS President, Terry Morton, has contributed an article for this issue of *CRM* on the 10th General Assembly of ICOMOS in Sri Lanka in 1993. (The first international issue of *CRM* was produced for the 8th General Assembly of ICOMOS in 1987 in Washington.) In terms of organization, attendance, financial support, papers, and publications the meeting in Sri Lanka was a fine achievement. However, the proceedings strongly suggest—to quote the words of a critical attendee—"that business was as usual and that UN programs are badly out of kilter, and UNESCO and ICOMOS are as much as any." UNESCO and its supporting Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are "so heavily molded by the Cold War" that they can't find the "right tempo or role to play to justify their existence" in a greatly altered world. Even though NGOs generally are finding their programs severely restricted because of the diminished resources of UNESCO and its member states, and of NGO national committees and their members, there seems to be a paucity of creative and comprehensive thinking about their evolving goals and ideals—thought which costs comparatively little. One of the basic problems is the inability to move beyond the parochial interests of traditional historic preservation and conceive of our international professional organizations as integral parts of the ecological movement. What presence did we have at the "Earth Summit"?

There are, nevertheless, historic preservation documents and efforts which suggest a nascent awareness of the interconnectedness of all human endeavors and the environment, such as the 1987 ICOMOS "Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas" (sometimes referred to as the Washington Charter) and, of course, the basic premise of the WHC which creatively combined the cultural and natural heritage. US/ICOMOS has moved beyond the usual programs of many international professional organizations (i.e., meetings of members and sharing information and technology) and successfully undertaken restoration and training projects in Croatia, Egypt, Ghana, and Yemen. There are also the NPS's cultural landscape initiatives, our acid rain program (which Susan Sherwood refers to in her article on Polish/American cooperation), the National Trust's Main Street program, and the American Institute of Architects concern for "sustain-

able design." But we are infants in our awareness of the magnitude of these recent global changes and of our role as professionals.

We thank all of our authors for their contributions and regret that space constraints did not allow the inclusion of other articles on international programs and projects in which the Park Service has participated. To name a few:

- The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) has drafted an international convention on stolen or illegally exported cultural objects; Dr. Francis McManamon and Dr. Veletta Canouts, from the NPS Archeological Assistance Division, attended meetings in Rome in 1993 for the review of this document, which aims to improve and strengthen the 1970 UNESCO "Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property" ("accepted" by US on September 2, 1983);
- Worldnet, the Television Film Service of the US Information Agency, has requested NPS and US/ICOMOS participation in programs on historic preservation which are broadcast overseas through US embassies;
- The National Trust Library at the University of Maryland is being assisted by WASO cultural resource staff in developing a reference collection on international historic preservation;
- ongoing technical assistance for Angkor Wat (the great temple of the ancient Khmer Empire in Cambodia, which is on the List of World Heritage in Danger);
- The Legacy Cultural Resources Program of the Department of Defense (DOD).

On October 22, 1993, DOD hosted a workshop on international cultural resources which was organized in partnership with the Park Service (Dr. Ruthann Knudson is our NPS Legacy Coordinator) and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. Many of our colleagues whose training and professional experience occurred during the Cold War decades never believed we would hear a high DOD official at such a meeting remark that "what we're really about is changing behavior." They are assessing their role in the protection of cultural and natural resources on the international level, and they are asking NPS assistance. At that meeting there was also a strong awareness of the linkage between cultural resource preservation, cultural diversity, and the environment. Imagine, someone even paraphrased Goethe: To know the world, and not despise it, is the end and aim of culture.

These ongoing activities and the needs of the new world order have encouraged us to plan for a third *CRM* issue on international historic preservation.

---

Dr. John Poppeliers is the NPS international liaison officer for cultural resources. An architectural historian, he was the Chief of HABS from 1972 to 1980. From 1980 to 1986 he was in charge of UNESCO's international campaigns to safeguard monuments and sites and of training in the field of conservation.